

Head Teacher Report – Tuesday 11th November 2025

Staffing:

Mrs. Anastasiya Robertson is our preferred candidate for a 22-hour Learning Support Worker role

Mrs. Lyn Irvine is our preferred candidate for a 16-hour temporary position for the remainder of this Academic Year.

School's mission – Continued work is going in to continuously raise the profile of our updated school mission – To be a Connected Community of Learners. This has been shared in assemblies, SE lessons, school communications, displays, social media etc.

Homework – A whole school meeting was held to discuss the development of a homework policy. Staff looked at guidance from Education Scotland, relevant academic research and best practice and considered our context and our pupils and families here in Whalsay. Ideas have been put forward from different staff groups across Primary and Secondary. The next stage of the process will be consultation with parents via a homework related survey. This will be sent out this week.

Whalsay Careers event – In partnership with Emily van Tonder and Developing the Young Workforce, we are going to have a Whalsay focused careers event on Thursday 4th December. The main aim of the event is to promote industries and potential employment opportunities that are available within the isle. It is also a continued effort to ensure that our school is strongly linked with the community. At this point, 19 businesses are confirmed with a few more being chased up. Pupil involvement will be from P7 – S4.

Building and maintenance works – The whole top floor of the Secondary School has had new flooring laid during the October half term. This covers the two ICT suites and the Social Studies classroom.

New chairs and tables have been put in a number of classrooms including English, Maths and Art.

Pupil benches for both the boys and the girls have been recovered.

Boys and girls bathrooms have been newly painted.

Plumbers have fixed a couple of issues with water circulation.

ICT department have upgraded the software on all pupil and staff laptops.

Some of the wireless access points have been upgraded to provide a faster internet connection. Further works to happen in this area at Easter.

Learning in the wider community

S1's and S2's visited the Science fair at the Clickimin/Anderson HS in Lerwick

S3's visited a number of Shetland based charities in Market House, Lerwick

School Improvement Visit

Scheduled for Monday 17th November. This will include discussions with HT, Pupil Council, reps from Parent Council and visits to lessons. Outcomes and report from the visit will help to inform our next steps and actions as a school.

Positive Relationships

Another School Development priority is the development of our Personal and Social Education curriculum. Pupils currently have a focus on anti-bullying in S1-S4 and we are in the early stages of developing a whole school anti-bullying policy in line with recommendations from Education Scotland and the SIC.

Primary updates

We are continuing to develop our outside areas for both P1/2 play and for breaktimes. We are looking for further loose parts materials to enhance these areas so donations of any of the following would be welcomed:

Creel, Life ring, Buoys, Steering wheel, Tyres, Plastic pipes, Cable spool, Fish box, Plastic crates, Rope

P3/4s have enterprise as their unit at the moment so if anyone is having a clear out, they are accepting donations this week.

Thank you to everyone who has supported with the Shoebox appeal this year, the boxes are ready to be delivered to Lerwick and beyond to support those who need it most.

Our P5 and P6/7 classes have introduced a new approach to learning maths this term called STEMspace. It is a short, focused programme that helps children develop maths skills through fun, practical tasks. With the sessions designed to be active, the pupils are developing essential skills but also making links to maths in real-life contexts. For pupils who may have found parts of maths difficult previously, we are seeing them experience greater success with this approach. This then leads to a boost in confidence. The programme is in its early days but we are looking forward to seeing how it progresses and evaluating it as a staff team, and with the pupils, to see how we take this forward in the future.